

America, Russia and George Bernard Shaw

REV. EDMUND A. WALSH, S.J.

Mr. Shaw's recent broadcast from London evoked the following radio reply from Dr. Walsh. Dr. Walsh, member of the Hoover American Relief Administration in Russia during the great famine and also representative of the Vatican in Russia during 1922-1923, is author of "The Fall of the Russian Empire" and "The Last Stand—An Interpretation of the Soviet Five Year Plan."

For the last seven years he has conducted a series of public lectures at Georgetown University in which the developments in Russia are studied. This talk was delivered over the Columbia System on October 11; the text is reprinted from the Pilot.

THE CONSTITUTION

ON July 4, 1776, there was published in the city of Philadelphia, a Declaration which was destined to serve not only as the enduring cornerstone of American liberties, but as a broad charter of fundamental and inalienable rights universally applicable. The historic event practically determined the political destiny of the two Americas and has profoundly influenced the development of democratic forms elsewhere. The document was drafted and signed by a group of determined men who pledged themselves to support it with their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. The pact was kept and its content was delivered, with seal unbroken, to all succeeding generations at Yorktown.

That catalogue of fundamental liberties penned by a great Virginian, Thomas Jefferson, found juridical expression thereafter in the Constitution of 1789.

Article IV, Section 4 of the organic law of the United States guarantees to every State in the Union, and by consequence to every citizen of every State, a Republican form of government. For one hundred and forty-two years that foremost of all its guarantees has been maintained. The Constitution was provided a framework, a method, and a reasonable working program which has stood the acid tests

of time, comparison, and human assault. It has not conjured up a political millennium. That would be magic indeed! It has not prevented incidental evils in the body politic. It has not eliminated all abuse, encompassed all truth and all justice, nor achieved complete social and economic equality. Which is only another way of saying that its creators were human beings not divine personalities; that the beneficiaries of its franchises are men, not angels, and that this earth of hot passions and frail natures—not heaven or Utopia—is the scene of action. The captious and the impatient could do no better than meditate occasionally on Edmund Burke's reflection: "The disposition to preserve, and the ability to improve, taken together, would be my standard of a statesman." The emphasis would rest on the two words "taken together."

SATISFIED WITH IDEALS

The people of the United States, by and large, have been satisfied with the political ideals outlined in the Constitution. They have profited by its wisdom, accepted its protection, and—with one notable exception,—generally approved the amendments introduced in response to unforeseen social necessities. That one unfortunate tampering with its spirit will be dealt with as a purely domestic issue to be resolved in due time by the sovereign will of the American people themselves.

Mr. Bernard Shaw, however, went to Russia last summer and made an important discovery. Within the brief compass of ten days, spent in observing the selected facts and Potemkin villages arranged by those skilled window-dressers in the Political Bureau of the Communist Party, that venerable comedian was enabled to compare the entire Russian achievement with conditions in the United States—which he has never visited for so much as one day. There's a lightning calculator for you! Addressing his American hearers as "boobs," and stooping down to accommodate his tone and language to their illiteracy, he urged the American people to scrap their Constitution and the political experience of a hundred and fifty years in favor of the better plan which he found in Moscow.

Now, Mr. Shaw is, of course, the acknowledged Playboy of the Western World. He is the licensed charlatan of English letters. You pay your entrance fee—which I understand is always large and guaranteed strictly in advance—

then sit back and enjoy the show. But it is a capital error, though a widespread one, to conclude that Mr. Shaw does not expect to be taken seriously. No man is in more deadly earnest than one who is consistently frivolous about the same thing and who propagates his philosophy of life under the diverse forms but with unchanged substance. Mr. Shaw, old-time campaigner that he is, knows full well that his life-long crusade for Socialism will grow cold and boresome the moment his audience suspects that he is sincere. For then his distinction vanishes and he becomes just an ordinary, vulgar mortal with a message, not one of the immortals—which would be exquisite torment for G. B. S. He is frankly an intellectual snob, but claims his talents give him the right to be. "I know of no man," he writes, "with the possible exception of Homer, for whose intellect, when I compare it with my own, I have more contempt than Shakespeare."

WIDESPREAD PUBLIC SUFFERING

But even a favorite court jester must keep his pranks within his privilege and not don cap and bells at every turn. The times are out of joint. There is widespread public suffering and much secret distress. The preliminary tremors of a possibly impending war are rumbling in from the Far East. Men of good will everywhere and statesmen charged with the heavy responsibilities of public office are straining every nerve to relieve the crushing weight of human woe and restore confidence to a shell-shocked world. Helpfulness, not carping cynicism, would seem to be the obligation of the hour laid by common decency on every normal man capable of influencing his fellow men.

It is, therefore, a distinct disservice for Mr. Shaw to release at this particular time that catalogue of half truths, those numerous historical inaccuracies and suppression of evidence, coupled with his callous disregard of the most poignant realities in the Russian tragedy of which he cannot possibly be ignorant. Not every listener to last Sunday's broadcast from London will have the time nor the opportunity nor the research facilities to check the truth of his statements, nor to fill in the great, yawning gaps in the picture evoked by his facile tongue. Consequently, the aureole of his name, though on the wane, will still satisfy large groups of his readers and hearers who remember him as a satirist of equal rank with Juvenal, Junius, and Dean

Swift. But that was before Mr. Shaw descended to the level and the vocabulary of Texas Guinan. His latest jibes and insults thrown across the Atlantic for the sure applause of his clientele were clothed this time in something more permanent than nonsense. They achieved the distinction of demonstrable falsehoods.

DIRECTION MORE IMPORTANT

Mr. Stalin's craft, he says, is the only big ship of State not rolling heavily in the doldrums and tapping out an S.O.S. on its wireless. It is forging rapidly ahead, on even keel, to certain achievement of its journey. He said nothing of the direction in which the ship is sailing. Direction, Mr. Shaw, is immeasurably more important than speed. The true course of that unhappy ship has been reversed and it is headed squarely away from the haven of that very liberty and human dignity which you have so long claimed to champion. So, too, the purpose of those roaring factories is more important than the number or the noise thereof. And the millions of acres of collectivized agriculture are not nearly so pertinent to the issue before the world as the ultimate goal of the Sovkhoz and the Kolkhoz. The Bolshevik Revolution was won and the support of those millions of peasants assured because of Lenin's hypnotic promises:—Bread for the hungry, peace with all the world, land to the peasants, power to the people, a Constituent Assembly elected by universal, direct and secret ballot, the factories to the proletariat, unlimited freedom of speech, of religion, of the press and of labor, inviolability of the people in their homes, freedom of movement and occupation, equal rights for every citizen.

What has happened to that programme? Shakespeare replies through the mouth of Polonius:—

Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows.

Instead of bread there shortly ensued the most appalling famine and pestilence recorded in the long history of Russian famines. Instead of cultivating peace with all the world, Soviet foreign policy has succeeded in alienating and irritating the governments of Europe and America by deliberately sowing the seeds of class warfare to an extent unequalled in the history of international relations. It has

issued a virtual declaration of war against the entire non-Communist world and actually subsidized social revolution in the Orient, the Balkans, and elsewhere. Instead of land to the peasant, the State has cancelled the most substantial achievements of the Agrarian Reform initiated immediately after the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 and confiscated anew the more than 110,000,000 acres (40,000,000 desiatines) that had been laboriously acquired outright by individual owners during that period. Today, contrary to popular belief, not one square inch of land is owned in fee simple by a single Russian peasant. Broken earth, indeed, broken hopes, broken promises.

INDICTMENT OF ENSLAVEMENT

Instead of vesting power in the people, the Soviet State has outdone absolutism itself by establishing a military dictatorship of one per cent over the remaining ninety-nine and cynically sustaining it through a terrorism that is matter of public record. The published and solemn protests of socialists, anarchists, and sincere liberals the world over place this fact above and beyond charges of partisanship. There is no more impressive indictment of this enslavement than the indignant protests of Albert Einstein, George Brandes, Sinclair Lewis, Maurice Maeterlinck, Knut Hamsun, H. G. Wells, Israel Zangwill, and Bertrand Russell registered in the preface of that Macedonian cry for help, "Letters from a Russian Prison." Mr. Oswald Garrison Villard and Professor Dewey have occasionally whispered a few mild words of deprecation. The name of Mr. Bernard Shaw is conspicuously absent. Instead of establishing a Constituent Assembly in which the voice of the Russian people might find free utterance for its sovereign will, the Soviet masters dispersed its legally elected members at the point of a bayonet at five o'clock in the morning of January 19, 1918. I maintain that the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly by armed troops marked the end of the Russian Revolution properly so called and ushered in the counter-revolution over which Mr. Shaw rhapsodizes.

Instead of the factories to the proletariat, it is the proletariat to the factories and the mines under the lash of the Five Year Plan, there to toil as serfs or convicts, and be paid, if paid at all, in depreciating currency by the sole owner of the factories, the State itself. Should the victims

murmur or protest, they are executed without trial as "counter-revolutionaries." Instead of unlimited freedom of the press, there has been created a State monopoly in absolute control of the printed word. Instead of liberty of speech, there is the eternal threat of the G. P. U., and the haunting spectre of universal espionage. Instead of freedom of religion, there has been initiated an obscene war on God financed by the State itself and designed to suffocate the inalienable rights of conscience. Instead of freedom of labor and occupation, there has been drafted a set of decrees empowering public authorities to seize and transport workers thousands of miles away from their homes to regions of obligatory labor. Instead of inviolability of person, home, and possessions, there have been thirteen unbroken years of terrorism, summary requisitions, domiciliary visits, and wholesale executions without trial before hidden tribunals. It is over this, the most hideous of Soviet iniquities, that Mr. Shaw makes most unnatural merriment. Instead of direct, equal, and secret ballot, there prevails a limited, unequal, and public voting system by show of hands under the scrutinizing eyes of government inspectors. Instead of equal rights for every citizen, six categories are disenfranchised by the Constitution (Article 69) on purely class grounds and treated as parasites and political pariahs.

THE RUSSIAN BUDGET

You tell us, Mr. Shaw, that America is in the bankruptcy court. That will be news—for the creditors. Who and where are they? You coin a new and curious definition of bankruptcy, despite the more than one substantial volume on economics that have issued from your pen. Bankruptcy, if I mistake not, means that the debtor is without funds to pay his creditors; that his liabilities exceed his assets and he passes into the hands of a receiver. Now, if America, with the largest gold reserve in the world and with those billions of debts owed to her is bankrupt, it is a form of national insolvency that should be hugged to the bosom with hoops of steel. I know of many European nations that would devoutly wish themselves such a misfortune. And have you forgotten the protest you make in the current number of "Political Quarterly of London"? There you say, with respect to the gold standard: "As we may still have no gold, we may have to sell what we own of the West

Indies to the Americans who are sitting helplessly on a thousand million pounds of it . . . " (*New York Times*, Oct. 15, 1931).

You then report that Soviet Russia, on the contrary, is flaunting a budget surplus of seven hundred and fifty million dollars. Were this true it ought not be difficult of accomplishment for a government which has confiscated the entire wealth of a great land, which controls all the means of production and of transportation, which is the arbitrary distributor of all food and all lodging, which has repudiated its legitimate foreign debt and which not only reduces its laborers to the status of economic serfs but obliges them, in addition, to pay forced contributions from their meager salaries into the national Treasury! That is the difference between England and Soviet Russia. Your government taxes capital and employers of labor to provide a dole for the unemployed, whereas in supposedly Communist Russia, the underpaid worker is obliged to contribute a designated percentage of his wages to support the most tyrannical exploiter of labor now existent, the State Capitalism which has displaced Communism. I suspect, too, you have not followed closely the sleight-of-hand practised on the ruble, nor counted the multitudinous issues of inflated currency by which the alchemists of Moscow transform a deficit into a surplus. They put a six cent ruble into a samovar and brew out any number of gold rubles, par value fifty-one cents. In any case, Mr. Bogdanov, who is Mr. Stalin's agent in New York, will hardly thank you for broadcasting to America that awkward item about a handsome surplus while he is seeking a credit of one hundred and fifty million dollars and facing the possibility of having to pay something like thirty-three per cent for it. Russian trade bills to the amount of two million dollars were recently peddled around New York on terms which would have netted that alluring profit to a certain bank, if it had chosen to do the business.

SOVIET LABOR CODE

You say that in the universal peace, order, efficiency, and security prevailing in Soviet Russia her people are employed to the last man. Now you were in Russia for ten mid-summer days and doubtless base your statements on wide personal observation. Did you ever fall in behind that last man in one of those convoys of dispossessed peas-

ants being herded to Siberia for forced labor in the lumber camps of Karelia or in the unspeakable depths of the coal mines of the Donet basin, or among the rigors of Solovetsky Island? Did you not observe the Red Guards with fixed bayonets walking before and behind those columns of proletarians, with their bowed heads and broken hearts? If you did not, Mr. J. N. Darling of the New York *Herald-Tribune* did, and in an uncensored article in his paper of October 11, 1931, describes in plain, unvarnished language how the Soviet State "employs" its man-power. Another American correspondent, Mr. Knickerbocker, who likewise stayed much longer than ten days and covered the entire land, reports, on the authority of Mr. Krylenko, Prosecutor-General of the Soviet State, that three million peasants have been ruthlessly torn from their homes since 1928 and exiled to distant points. There these supposed beneficiaries in whose name the Russian Revolution was fought, are forcibly employed in the production of monopolized commodities destined for indiscriminate dumping on the free markets of the world for the profit of the most colossal Capitalist on this planet. We waited hopefully during your broadcast for a Liberal's protest in defence of freedom. We encountered only the silence of the tomb.

And did you read the Soviet Labor Code, particularly the administrative decrees at the end which provide specifically and exhaustively for the rounding up of able-bodied men against their will and their transportation, at the point of a bayonet, to the "lumber front" and other centers of the new serfdom? That official Soviet document, published by the Labor government of England, is obtainable at His Majesty's Stationery Office Kingsway, London. If you care to read, for example, page 141, 146, 148, 149, 153, 155, 156, etc.,—right through to the bitter end you will understand what repulsive practices you are glorifying under that mellifluous phrase: "No unemployment."

A SLIGHT ERROR

And you tell us that capital punishment has been abolished. Acceptance of that patent falsehood is plain intellectual suicide. Not to mention the mass murders during the Terror, the number of executions has steadily mounted since the inception of the Five Year Plan in 1928. The first two days of August, 1930, witnessed 300 executions. Forty-eight prisoners were executed on September 24, 1930, an act

of barbarism that called forth the indignant protest of noted scientists, publicists, liberals, socialists, and sincere radicals in all parts of the civilized world. These are facts of public record which make it extremely difficult for a reasonable man to penetrate the sincerity attributed to Mr. Shaw by Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton.

You say that Soviet courts are lenient to criminals. Doubtless. Professional courtesy. But it will come as a definite surprise to us in America to learn that it was the Soviets who brought about the abdication of the Tzar and the fall of the Russian empire. You picture the stronghold of autocracy crumbling, like the walls of Jericho, before the blasts of the Bolshevik trumpets. A slight error, Sir, of eight months. The Russian Revolution was effected on March 16, 1917, by liberals such as Paul Miliukov, Prince Lvov, Gutchkov, Shulgin, Rodzianko and the Duma. Neither Lenin nor Trotsky were anywhere on Russian territory at that historic moment, the former living in Switzerland and Mr. Trotsky in New York. It was only on November 7 of the same year that the Bolshevik Party triumphed over Constitutional Democracy. It will come as a still greater surprise for students of American history to learn that these leaders then "established a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics exactly as Washington and Jefferson and Hamilton and Franklin and Tom Paine established the United States of America one hundred and forty-one years before." To suggest that the political, social and economic institutions existing in Soviet Russia bear the slightest resemblance to the philosophy of government embodied in the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights is to invite us again to commit intellectual hara-kiri. As well ask us to believe that Mr. William Z. Foster is really Calvin Coolidge in disguise.

UNPREPARED FOR PROGRAM

I was the man (continues Mr. Shaw) who helped establish Communism in Russia. I was master of Marxism long before Lenin; he but followed my example. If that be true, Mr. Shaw, you should have galloped over to Petrograd post haste years ago and stopped those impatient Hot-spurs from committing their fundamental error, to the discredit of your invention. It was not Marxian Communism they imposed by the sword on the bewildered moujiks but

a form of Syndicalism that would have done credit to the Neronic Sorel himself.

Communism, in the extreme form, championed by the left wing of the Social Democrat Party, should never have been put to the supreme test in a country so empirically unprepared for its reception as Russia. Communism presupposes not only certain strong psychological persuasions, but a groundwork of antecedent experience as well. Marx drew up his indictment on the observed record of sixty years of capitalism at work in a machine age; no such background existed in Russia generally, to convince the peasant of the validity of Marx's conclusions and demonstrate the immediate necessity of scientific socialism. It was an erroneous interpretation of opportunity to attempt immediate application of integral Communism in a Community so essentially, so predominantly agricultural as Russia. The line of reasoning developed by Marx was the result of observation; he synthesized the experience of Western European laborers during the half century following the Industrial Revolution, years which were characterized by the increasing use of machinery in industry.

And if I mistake not, you yourself depreciated the disappearance of orthodox Marxism some years ago. In October, 1927, you wrote a letter to Dr. Adler of Vienna in which you scoffed at the Bolsheviks saying:

After the war, the government of Italy was so feeble that silly syndicalists were seizing factories and fanatical devotees of that curious attempt at a new Catholic Church called the Third International were preaching a coup d'etat and crusade in all directions and imagining that this sort of thing was Socialism and Communism.

This letter was dated you may recall October 2, 1927, was printed in the *Manchester Guardian* and reprinted in the *Living Age* of December 1, 1927, page 969. Have the Bolsheviks so changed for the better since 1927 as to merit the extravaganzas of praise and the ecstatic encomium you indulged in last Sunday?

MAKING WAY FOR WELFARE

However, you are, I must confess on safer ground when in an obiter dictum you remark: "Men make money by looking after themselves, not by looking after the public." We understand here in America that you are entirely competent there and may speak with considerable authority. I

recall a letter you wrote not so long ago—to an English parson, I believe,—refusing to contribute your services in any form for a certain worthy charity on the principle that you never do anything for nothing. I remember, too, your complaint that the Bolsheviks had pirated your writings and were publishing them in Moscow without the formality of paying the royalties due. Was it not the *Daily Herald* of London, an enthusiastic supporter of Bolshevik claims, which was refused a free article by you on the recent return from Moscow headquarters? “Thrift, Horatio, thrift,”—though as un-Marxian as belief in the Diety and a scandal, I fear, to pure collectivists.

Let no man hastily conclude that in replying to Mr. Shaw I am simply making a defence of vested interests simply and solely because they lie within the established order of things. There is no inherent sanctity attaching to capitalism, neither to the term nor to the practice. But there is reverence for Christian civilization, whose very name derives from a divine personality and whose spiritual content is the light and hope of the world. The way to restored confidence lies primarily through a re-examination of the ethical connotation of a living wage; the demand is for more equitable distribution of the fruits of industry through profit-sharing and cooperation; for a chastened sense of fellowship between employer and employed, such as existed in the mediaeval guilds, based on the consciousness of a common origin and a supernatural destiny; for recognition of the claims of workers to some practical form of insurance against old age and unemployment—in short, for a voluntary and frank examination of every constructive social reform advanced by Soviet theory without its odious implications of crass materialism, Caesarism, irreligion and arrogant internationalism. On the day when not salary alone, but dividend on their sole and daily dwindling capital of flesh and blood, is assured the laborers of the earth—and they constitute the great bulk of mankind—Communism will vanish as an international menace. For in that hour reason will have achieved what Caliban would impose at the too-great price of universal standardization, the enslavement of Ariel and humanity bound to the chariot wheels of the Third International.

The Human Appearance of Christ

REV. BERNARD LEEMING, S.J.

A paper reprinted from the Clergy Review, September, 1931.

THE bizarre theory of Eisler, so much discussed recently, may perhaps justify some fuller treatment of the human aspect of our Savior. In the first thousand years after His death there were at least four hundred and fifty different representations of Him made by artists; are they all merely the fanciful creations of artists' dreams, or do any of them pretend to real portraiture? Does tradition, either in literature or in art, afford us (with any fair approximation to safety) a general type of countenance which was actually our Lord's?

A vigorous affirmative answer was given by Sir Wyke Bayliss in his charming and delightful book "Rex Regum," published in 1898, holding strongly that there is a traditional "likeness" of our Lord which represents Him, at least in broad feature, exactly as He actually appeared when on this earth in life. A certain fresco in the catacombs, beautifully copied by the distinguished artist Thomas Heapy and reproduced in Sir Wyke's book, is claimed to be both typical of the "likeness" which all later artists accepted as the basis of their work, and the earliest appearance of the "likeness." In it Sir Wyke finds that definite type of countenance which, varied indeed by different expressions given by different artists, still has held sway in all Christian pictures of Christ: "the fair broad forehead, the arched eyebrows, the straight nose, the kind yet serious mouth, the falling of the hair upon the shoulders, the parting of the beard." All this (says Sir Wyke Bayliss) is the traditional and the true likeness of Christ. This same fresco is thus described by the artist Kleugner: "The face is oval, with a straight nose, arched eyebrows, a smooth and rather high forehead, the expression serious and mild; the hair, parted on the forehead, flows in long curls down the shoulders; the beard is not thick, but short and divided; the age between thirty and forty."

"There is a general opinion," R. St. John Tyrwhitt says of this fresco, "that it may have been of as early date as the second century; and what we know of it may well induce us to believe that it was the original of that ideal of our

Lord's countenance which has passed, through Leonardo da Vinci, into all Christian painting." Sir Wyke Bayliss declares that the features of the fresco are the same as those in nearly all representations of Christ—those on engraved vessels of glass, the mosaics, metal ornaments, and cloth pictures. He concludes that some one who had known Christ in Palestine came to Rome and painted this picture in the catacombs, the presence there of Peter and Paul guaranteeing its correctness. "It is inconceivable that they would have sanctioned the perpetuation of any likeness of Him, knowing it to be false."

Unhappily, Sir Wyke Bayliss was more of an art critic than a scholar; he writes with the high enthusiasm and the charm of a poet, and one regrets that more prosaic authorities such as Wilpert, Calmet, Martigny, Northcote and Brownlow, Leclercq, to mention but a few, agree that we have no authentic representation of Christ. The fresco referred to actually was in the catacombs of Domatilla, though Sir Wyke Bayliss, with several others, assigns it to the catacombs of Callixtus. Moreover, it does not appear to have been photographed until the deadly effects of damp and smoke had almost obliterated its distinctive features; the copies made by hand are of dubious exactitude, and those shown by Kleugner, Heapy, Bosio, and Avanzini differ very considerably one from the other. Further, the dating is, to say the least, uncertain; and Tyrwhitt's assertion of agreement on the second century is contradicted by Wilpert, who assigns it certainly to the second half of the fourth century, and by de Rossi, Lindsay, Northcote and Brownlow, who assign it dubiously to the third. Thus the most competent archaeologists would account it as having been painted at least one hundred and sixty years or so after our Savior's death. Apart, however, from the question of the date of this particular painting, there are two main reasons why the authorities generally agree that we have no authentic portrait of Christ: first, the pictures in the catacombs; and second, the written tradition in the matter.

It will scarcely be denied that Wilhelm Wilpert's monumental work on the pictures in the catacombs is the greatest authority. Wilpert was a fellow-worker with de Rossi, was asked by the Pontifical Commission on Excavation to continue de Rossi's work, and in 1903, after more than fifty years of intense labor and study, produced "*Le Pitture delle Catacombe Romane*." The book reproduces over 280 pic-

tures of Christ taken from the walls of the catacombs, and its author, after discussing them, concludes as follows:

Looking at the representations of Christ in the catacombs, we find that we cannot speak of a fixed type; not even the figures which are painted in the same room and by the same hand present the same resemblance. What St. Augustine says of the representations of Christ in his day: "*Nam et ipsius Domini facies carnis innumerabilium cogitationum variatur et fingitur, quae tamen una erat quaecumque erat,*" can be applied to the pictures in the catacombs. The artists only agree in this, that they represent Him as beardless when He works miracles, and from the third century onward they usually give Him abundant hair. The expression of the face varies in the beginning between that of a youth and that of a man; later it becomes boyish. This incertitude in the appearance of the head of Christ sufficiently demonstrates that the painters of the catacombs did not in fact possess a portrait of Christ.

Wilpert points out also that there was a certain evolution in the type of painting: the earlier pictures are always beardless, and the reason for this is interesting. In the first and second centuries in Rome it was the fashion to shave; to wear a beard had as definite a significance as to wear a uniform. A beard was the sign of mourning, or of the profession of "philosophy." Neither became Christ, and the actual fact that Christ wore a beard according to the Jewish custom did not outweigh the Christian desire to dissociate Him both from the quack profession of "philosophy," and from the mourning and grief which He came to destroy by His resurrection. Especially in the catacombs, where the blessed dead waited to join Him in His resurrection, the beard, significative of the hopeless mourning and wailing of the pagans, was looked upon as unfitting the glorious risen Savior. Only once before the third century is He represented with a beard, and then only at the Judgment. But "even in the fourth century," adds Wilpert, "the painters prefer the youthful type; and this is a proof that they did not intend portraiture."

Indeed, actual portraiture seems alien to the spirit in which these paintings were made. That spirit was the sacramental spirit, and accordingly, with very few exceptions, the paintings in the catacombs are not historical but symbolic—that is, they were painted, not to represent an event that actually happened so that the observer could see it as it happened for the sake of its own interest or beauty, but they were painted to raise the mind of the beholder to a spiritual truth. "Instead of directly denoting the object,"

says Kleugner, "the forms of art became mere exponents of an abstract idea." Like the parables in the Gospels, they were real pictures, but symbolical, in order, as Northcote and Brownlow put it, "to suggest and teach religious truths by means of sights and acts of ordinary life, invested with a spiritual meaning." Thus from the Old Testament the most frequently selected subjects are Noe in the ark, symbolic of salvation; Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac, symbolic of Christ; Moses striking the rock, symbolic of the flowing waters of eternal life; the three children in the furnace, Daniel in the lion's den, Jonas in the belly of the whale, all symbolic of the safety of the Christian. The artists were not interested in historical accuracy; in fact as Wilpert says, sometimes the face of Moses could be substituted for the face of Christ. For the pictures were never intended to be contemplated from the historical point of view, they express only the moral or devotional truth. De Rossi says: "The symbolical interpretation of the hieratic cycle is established beyond all dispute, not only by the choice and arrangement of subjects, but also by the mode of representing them."

This symbolic principle is clearly manifest in the representations of Christ. The aim was not to depict Christ as He actually existed, labored, and suffered, but to declare by picture something of what He is in the life of a Christian. They do this, of course, by representing actual scenes from the Gospels; but these scenes are obviously selected and placed in the catacombs to declare and to suggest their faith: "Our Savior Jesus Christ destroyed death and brought to light life and incorruption." And so He is found in these dark, dank, underground passages as the Good Shepherd, as raising Lazarus, as multiplying the loaves and fishes, as miraculously healing the paralytic at Bethsaida, the woman with the issue of blood, the man born blind; as talking of the waters of life to the sinful woman at the well in Samaria. But the favorite subject was the Good Shepherd, which occurs, according to Northcote and Brownlow, twice as often as any other subject, and by my own calculation from the "List" in Leclercq, more than five times as often as any other picture of Christ, except the raising of Lazarus.

In these pictures Christ is almost invariably boyish and beardless. His hair is short and He wears a short tunic girded round His loins, and sandals and laced greaves. Over the tunic He sometimes wears a mantle or coat of skin.

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Looking at the representations of Christ in the catacombs, we find that we cannot speak of a fixed type; not even the figures which are painted in the same room and by the same hand present the same resemblance. What St. Augustine says of the representations of Christ in his day: "*Nam et ipsius Domini facies carnis innumerabilium cogitationum variatur et fingitur, quae tamen una erat quaecumque erat,*" can be applied to the pictures in the catacombs. The artists only agree in this, that they represent Him as beardless when He works miracles, and from the third century onward they usually give Him abundant hair. The expression of the face varies in the beginning between that of a youth and that of a man; later it becomes boyish. This incertitude in the appearance of the head of Christ sufficiently demonstrates that the painters of the catacombs did not in fact possess a portrait of Christ.

Wilpert points out also that there was a certain evolution in the type of painting: the earlier pictures are always beardless, and the reason for this is interesting. In the first and second centuries in Rome it was the fashion to shave; to wear a beard had as definite a significance as to wear a uniform. A beard was the sign of mourning, or of the profession of "philosophy." Neither became Christ, and the actual fact that Christ wore a beard according to the Jewish custom did not outweigh the Christian desire to dissociate Him both from the quack profession of "philosophy," and from the mourning and grief which He came to destroy by His resurrection. Especially in the catacombs, where the blessed dead waited to join Him in His resurrection, the beard, significative of the hopeless mourning and wailing of the pagans, was looked upon as unfitting the glorious risen Savior. Only once before the third century is He represented with a beard, and then only at the Judgment. But "even in the fourth century," adds Wilpert, "the painters prefer the youthful type; and this is a proof that they did not intend portraiture."

Indeed, actual portraiture seems alien to the spirit in which these paintings were made. That spirit was the sacramental spirit, and accordingly, with very few exceptions, the paintings in the catacombs are not historical but symbolic—that is, they were painted, not to represent an event that actually happened so that the observer could see it as it happened for the sake of its own interest or beauty, but they were painted to raise the mind of the beholder to a spiritual truth. "Instead of directly denoting the object,"

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says Kleugner, "the forms of art became mere exponents of an abstract idea." Like the parables in the Gospels, they were real pictures, but symbolical, in order, as Northcote and Brownlow put it, "to suggest and teach religious truths by means of sights and acts of ordinary life, invested with a spiritual meaning." Thus from the Old Testament the most frequently selected subjects are Noe in the ark, symbolic of salvation; Abraham about to sacrifice Isaac, symbolic of Christ; Moses striking the rock, symbolic of the flowing waters of eternal life; the three children in the furnace, Daniel in the lion's den, Jonas in the belly of the whale, all symbolic of the safety of the Christian. The artists were not interested in historical accuracy; in fact as Wilpert says, sometimes the face of Moses could be substituted for the face of Christ. For the pictures were never intended to be contemplated from the historical point of view, they express only the moral or devotional truth. De Rossi says: "The symbolical interpretation of the hieratic cycle is established beyond all dispute, not only by the choice and arrangement of subjects, but also by the mode of representing them."

This symbolic principle is clearly manifest in the representations of Christ. The aim was not to depict Christ as He actually existed, labored, and suffered, but to declare by picture something of what He is in the life of a Christian. They do this, of course, by representing actual scenes from the Gospels; but these scenes are obviously selected and placed in the catacombs to declare and to suggest their faith: "Our Savior Jesus Christ destroyed death and brought to light life and incorruption." And so He is found in these dark, dank, underground passages as the Good Shepherd, as raising Lazarus, as multiplying the loaves and fishes, as miraculously healing the paralytic at Bethsaida, the woman with the issue of blood, the man born blind; as talking of the waters of life to the sinful woman at the well in Samaria. But the favorite subject was the Good Shepherd, which occurs, according to Northcote and Brownlow, twice as often as any other subject, and by my own calculation from the "List" in Leclercq, more than five times as often as any other picture of Christ, except the raising of Lazarus.

In these pictures Christ is almost invariably boyish and beardless. His hair is short and He wears a short tunic girded round His loins, and sandals and laced greaves. Over the tunic He sometimes wears a mantle or coat of skin.

The clothing is often adorned with flower-shaped ornaments or with stripes of color. His head is almost invariably uncovered. In His left hand He bears His shepherd's crook, and sometimes in His right the milk-pail (*mulctra*) symbolic of Holy Communion. Often He carries the found sheep or lamb on His shoulders. The whole appearance is virile, noble, and gracious, speaks of strength and joy, and symbolises, as Wilpert says, in its youthfulness, the divine and changeless Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Judging from their pictures in the catacombs, these early Christians do not appear to have thought of Christ so much as the Man of Sorrows, bruised and afflicted, as of the triumphant Shepherd, from whose hand no one can snatch His sheep. It was doubtless with reference to some of these pictures of the Good Shepherd, in which a goat instead of a sheep is carried, that Tertullian reproached St. Callixtus, "the good shepherd and blessed Pope," with "seeking to find his goats in the parable of the sheep."

Considering the cheerful tone of these pictures in the catacombs, it is surprising that the tradition as to our Savior's aspect is not unanimous; several of the Fathers, however, appear to have applied to Christ in a universal and absolute sense the prophecies of Isaiah: "There is no beauty in Him nor comeliness," "despised and most abject of men," which obviously only apply to Him in His passion. St. Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origen, though doubtfully, and St. Basil and St. Cyril accepted these prophecies as meaning that Christ was unprepossessing in human appearance. Other Fathers, however, held that He must have been noble and beautiful. St. Jerome says: "The brightness and majesty of His divinity shed its rays over His human countenance and subdued all who had the happiness to gaze upon it." He applies to Christ the Psalm: "Thou art fairer than the children of men," saying "unless He had possessed something starry (*sidereum quiddam*) in His face and His eyes, the Apostles would never have followed Him at once nor would those who came to seize Him have fallen to the ground."

Now this very difference of opinion, as Martigny well remarks, put out of court at once the supposition that there existed any authentic portrait of Christ or even any trustworthy verbal description of Him. If it had, how easily could Origen have answered the taunt of the Jew Celsus that Christ was ill favored. If it had, St. Jerome would have

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However, it may not be out of place to indicate that we have solid reasons for believing that our Lord was noble and beautiful in appearance. I quote from the rationalist Keim, who thus gives what is really a scholastic argument:

We cannot easily think of the even balance and harmony of the spirit that rests in God, as united to bodily decrepitude, or even to a repellant physiognomy: we think of Him as healthy, vigorous, of expressive countenance, not, as Weiner and Hase supposed on insufficient grounds, without characteristic features; as if a Spirit and a will like His must not needs create what was full of character.

And of the evidence from the Gospels, the same author says:

It is plain His was a manly, commanding, prophetic figure. The people, so much at the mercy of outward impressions, could not otherwise have greeted Him, especially just after John, as a prophet and as the Son of David; and the reproach of His foes would have attacked Him even on the side of bodily defects. Besides, we have the fact that His appearance on the scene, His words, His eye, seized and shook the hearers and beholders; the fact that men, women, children, sick, and poor felt happy at His feet and in His presence.

But a still stronger argument, to my mind, is the sense of the faithful. This was clearly manifested to me one day by a very simple old woman who had lost her only son. In the corridor of the convent where she was staying there was a Pietà. Coming out of the chapel, she saw it, looked at it, and wept. Then throwing her arms about it, she said: "Aye, mither, Ye've lost your bonny Boy, as I've lost mine."

The clothing is often adorned with flower-shaped ornaments or with stripes of color. His head is almost invariably uncovered. In His left hand He bears His shepherd's crook, and sometimes in His right the milk-pail (*mulctra*) symbolic of Holy Communion. Often He carries the found sheep or lamb on His shoulders. The whole appearance is virile, noble, and gracious, speaks of strength and joy, and symbolises, as Wilpert says, in its youthfulness, the divine and changeless Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Judging from their pictures in the catacombs, these early Christians do not appear to have thought of Christ so much as the Man of Sorrows, bruised and afflicted, as of the triumphant Shepherd, from whose hand no one can snatch His sheep. It was doubtless with reference to some of these pictures of the Good Shepherd, in which a goat instead of a sheep is carried, that Tertullian reproached St. Callixtus, "the good shepherd and blessed Pope," with "seeking to find his goats in the parable of the sheep."

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There was manifest the unreflecting yet certain *sensus fidelium*. Mary's Son must have been "bonny."

Personally, I feel glad that we have not a "likeness" of our Savior. A portrait is the transference into color and form of one symbolic flash of vision into a human soul. Of its nature, it is personal to the artist, even while it is representative of the object, and is really one man's moment of intuition shining upon canvas, and therefore does not exhaust the object. Now what painter, even if he had looked upon the face of our Lord, could find the soul behind, and so paint that the imaged face showed forth the character, the mind, the heart? How paint the looks that children found so winning, the expression the young man saw when Christ looked on him and loved him, the look that pierced the soul of Peter in the courtyard, when "the Lord, turning, looked on Peter"? "If the face of man reflects the soul," wrote Didon, "Jesus must have been the most beautiful among the sons of men. The light of God, veiled by the shadow of sorrow, illuminated His brow with a softened splendor which no human art could ever succeed in painting." Would not any "likeness" fail of the reality, and fail likewise in answering our expectations? "It would be heaven to me," wrote Rutherford, "just to peep through a hole in heaven's doors to see Christ's countenance." Our Savior in life must have drawn to Him every man of good will; indeed Origen suggested that His aspect varied with the spiritual capacities of the beholder. It is repellant to think that a "likeness" of Him might have failed to appeal to some men of good will. Speaking of certain pictures of Christ and the saints, Father Martindale asks: "What happens when a boy or girl wakes up to the fact not only that our Lord, or even the saints, could not possibly have looked like that, but that we could not have stood it for a moment if they had looked like that?" Personally, the so-called "traditional likeness" does not appeal to me; I am very glad indeed that our Lord did not look like that. "It is expedient for you that I go," He said: yet how could it possibly be expedient for us that we should not have His physical presence amongst us? He gave us the answer Himself: the gift of the Holy Spirit. He went from us Himself and He left us no portrait, possibly that we may conceive Him more spiritually and cultivate more generously that purity of heart by which we shall one day see Him face to face in the courts of everlasting day.

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Exposition of St. Francis Xavier's Body

The following are a few paragraphs from the Pastoral Letter of His Excellency, the Patriarch of the East Indies, announcing the solemn veneration to be paid to the body of the great missionary.

A GREAT event, which, we expect, will much contribute towards the glory of the Lord of heaven and earth, and help to obtain from His infinite goodness torrents of graces of salvation and sanctification, not only for the Primatial Archdiocese of Goa, but also for the East Indies and the whole of the East, will take place, God permitting, in the current year, 1931.

We allude to the public and solemn exposition of the incorrupt body of the great apostle of the East Indies, St. Francis Xavier.

From December 3 of the current year, the feast of our glorious saint, the revered body of that most saintly priest, incomparable apostle of the East Indies and Japan (whom the Sovereign Pontiff has chosen and constituted heavenly Patron of all Missionaries and Missions of the whole world), will be exposed to public view and veneration in the Old City of Goa during thirty days.

We trust that thousands of pilgrims from many dioceses of India will come, as in all former occasions, to prostrate themselves at the feet of our glorious apostle St. Francis Xavier, and enjoy the happiness of kissing his most precious relics on this occasion.

With no less satisfaction would we see here in India representatives from China. The incorrupt body of the great Xavier, which, by Divine disposition, we have been given to keep in Goa, is that same body that fell to the earth out of sheer exhaustion at the gates of the Celestial Empire. It could not enter it, but his soul did, and there it lives, just as it lives in all other Missions of the East. Yes, his soul lives in them, protects them, encourages them, and defends them. It is for this reason that the Sovereign Pontiff, as we mentioned above, constituted St. Francis Xavier heavenly Patron of all Missions and of all Missionaries.

Let us all pray to our saint that he may bring back to the Catholic Faith so many prodigal sons, who, having once abandoned it, have also abandoned *ipso facto* St. Francis Xavier himself; let us all pray to our saint that, should these wayward, unfortunate people resist the grace which he will certainly obtain for them from the Lord, He may give us in their stead as many, if not more, converts; let us pray to him that God may raise up many and holy missionaries that these may, in the strength and light of the Holy Ghost, work the conversion of so many millions of the faithless inhabitants of Hindustan and of the whole East who still live in the deepest darkness of error and paganism; let us pray to him to undo and cause to fall through certain schemes, or threats, which, should they come about, will deeply disturb the religious peace of Hindustan; let us pray that he may bring back peace and order in China and that these millions of men may open their eyes to the light of the truth in those vast regions as well as in the flourishing empire of Japan; let us ask him to protect our common and most loving father, the Roman Pontiff; let us remind him of so many and so grave needs of the Catholic Church our Holy Mother; for peace and happiness for our Mother-Country; let us pray to him finally that human society, so disturbed at the present hour, may see that in the teaching of Jesus Christ alone, and of His Vicar on Earth, the remedy may be found against the terrible evils that tear it to pieces, as well as other not less horrible that threaten.

In order to foster the piety of the pilgrims, and that they be better prepared, so that their prayers may deserve to be presented by our saint before the throne of God Omnipotent, we are going to ask the Supreme Pontiff the favour of granting a Jubilee with plenary indulgence, during the whole time of the solemn exposition of the revered body of St. Francis Xavier, to all the faithful Christians who visit the Church of "BOM JESUS," wherein his most precious relics are found. We shall in due time promulgate that favour when it is granted—as we confidently expect.

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